

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA PARK BOARD
HELD AT CITY HALL
JANUARY 13, 2015
7 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gieseke called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Answering roll call were Members Jones, Gieseke, Steel, Jacobson, McCormick, Segreto, Greene.

Member Cella arrived at 8:26 p.m.

Student Members present: Chowdhury, Colwell.

Absent: Member Downing.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Member Greene made a motion, seconded by Member Segreto, approving the meeting agenda.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick.

Motion carried.

IV. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Member McCormick made a motion, seconded by Member Greene, approving the consent agenda as follows:

IV.A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Park Board Meeting of Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick.

Motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

None

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

VI.A. Braemar Golf Course Master Plan Update

Joe Abood, Braemar Golf Course General Manager, introduced Richard Mandell from Richard Mandell Golf Architecture Consulting Services (RMGA).

Mr. Mandell gave a presentation to the Park Board on four different alternatives for the Braemar Golf Course site. He first presented Option A to the Park Board.

Member Jones asked where the oak savanna was located. Mr. Mandell showed on the map where they are located and indicated there is almost 15 acres that can be preserved oak savanna, which is more than is being preserved now.

Member Jones asked how much they were cutting into the forest to which Mr. Mandell replied approximately five to six acres.

Member Segreto wondered if they were to add up all of the cut-ins into the oak savanna if they would get 15 acres. Mr. Mandell showed where the protected habitat was located and noted that not all of the oak savanna was being protected. He noted where the unprotected oak savanna was located on the golf course. He stated there are areas that are not protected by the permit and could be replaced and not managed right now.

Member Jones was not sure what the Corps of Engineers has to say about preserving the oak savanna because she thought they were more concerned about flooding, the watershed and maintenance issues. Mr. Mandell indicated Barr Engineering is also the landscape ecologist and oak savanna is a part of the landscape ecology of Braemar. They have experience with them and will help them come up with the best plan for the golf course and preserving the Oak Savanna.

Mrs. Kattreh informed the Park Board that, in conjunction with the Engineering Department, they have hired Barr Engineering to be their environmental consultant for the entire golf course to review the storm water management as well as the overall ecology. She noted Ross Bintner, the city's Environmental Engineer, will later be giving a presentation specifically regarding the driving range and executive course and will show some good examples of how they hope to restore the environmental habitat in that area.

Member Jones stated as they move ahead and compare different options, it would be helpful to state how much of the golf course is being expanded into the wooded areas. Mr. Mandell stated the total right now is approximately a half acre. They have not calculated the entire course numbers yet because they wanted to bring this forward to see what the Park Board liked and wanted.

Mr. Mandell presented Option B to the Park Board and noted Option B is very similar to Option A with one exception. He stated in listening to the golfers, they wanted to possibly restore the original 18th hole from when Braemar was an 18-hole golf course.

Member Jones asked if they are making the 1st hole and 2nd hole more friendly to which Mr. Mandell replied they are. He noted the 1st hole through the 17th hole in Option B are the same as in Option A; the only thing changing between the two options is the 18th hole. Member Jones asked if all of the holes will be a little more even along with restoring the 18th hole to which Mr. Mandell responded that was correct.

Mr. Mandell presented Option C to the Park Board.

Member Greene asked Mr. Mandell in his experience is there a better chance of being more profitable with three regulation 9-hole courses versus two regulation 9-hole courses with an executive course. Mr. Mandell replied he believes it is.

Member Greene asked if people who run tournaments ever rent executive courses when there are two regulation 9-hole courses available or is it better management to run three 9-hole courses that are regulation. Mr. Abood indicated you are better off with three regulation 9-hole courses.

Chair Gieseke asked in your experience who is a typical player on the executive course. Mr. Mandell pointed out the executive golf course is intended for people that do not have the time to play a regulation golf course. He noted it was never intended to be a lesser golf course for beginners. Member Gieseke stated he could see some advantages of having three sets of 9-hole courses that are regulation versus having one executive piece. He asked without the executive course, can they meet the demands of the golfers and serve everyone's needs to which Mr. Mandell replied he thought they could.

Member Jones asked what the acreage of forest loss would be in Option C, to which Mr. Mandell show on the map the area of trees that would be removed.

Member Jones asked what would be the benefit of Option C. Mr. Mandell pointed out the benefit would be that they will have less golf hole acreage to maintain and renovate and therefore construction and maintenance fees will go down and that is the only benefit he sees.

Mr. Mandell presented Option D to the Park Board.

Chair Gieseke asked how much interest in general was there in restoring the old 18th hole. Mr. Abood responded he thought they saw more of that in the walk-through a few months ago than they did at last night's open house when the actual plans were shown.

Chair Gieseke asked which of these options allows more creativity and attractiveness to the course that will create a buzz. Mr. Mandell responded they would have the most creativity with 18 holes versus 27 holes. Mr. Abood stated financially having 27 holes is the best option for the city; however, any of the options shown will improve the course and that is something they have to consider.

Member Greene asked how much tournament business they get because with an additional 9 holes they can always have someone start on the front or back or middle where on an 18-hole course they would be boxing them in. Mr. Abood stated the additional 9 holes give them a substantial amount of stability.

Member Steel stated she was a little concerned with the feedback regarding restoring the 18th hole. Demographically, the people that are giving the feedback leaves a few generations left out because they were not around in 1994. She wondered how they were weighing the feedback in terms of demographics because this is a long-term investment so she wanted to ensure they are serving everyone for many years to come. Mr. Abood replied the whole reason they had the walk-through was to get feedback and basically it started their conversation all over again. There was a good mix of golfers at the walk-through and it did come up that restoring the 18th hole may not be the best direction to go so more discussion is definitely needed.

Mr. Mandell indicated the walk-through in October consisted of different groups of women, seniors and juniors along with a variety of men golfers; so they did hear specifically from different demographics.

Member McCormick thought it would be helpful for the Park Board to know that they are doing a tree study at the facility to which it was noted it will be completed in July.

Member McCormick informed the Park Board they also collected a lot of feedback and comments at yesterday's open house. She noted the task force will evaluate that information at their next meeting. Mr. Mandell pointed out that the four options came from the feedback they received during the walk-through in October. Member Steel asked was the feedback all combined and not based on demographics to which Member McCormick replied they did not collect names or ages. Mr. Abood informed the Park Board that a lot of the feedback initially came from the National Golf Foundation survey that was sent out prior to Mr. Mandell arriving. He indicated they received approximately 800 responses which came from all different demographics. Mr. Mandell added that some of the feedback they received was from women and they will be able to identify that by what was stated.

Member McCormick stated the feedback was very detailed and helpful and a lot of issues were identified with the golf course. She added it might be helpful to summarize and distribute the feedback to the Park Board. Mr. Abood responded he will consolidate the feedback and get it to the Park Board.

Member Jones wondered if they could incorporate a similar type of glorified pitch and putt into the course because there are segments of the population in Minnesota that are real golfers and recreational golfers. Mr. Abood replied once they figure out the golf course they could incorporate that along with trails and other things of interest.

Member Jones asked how this will be used in the winter and would like for them to consider ski trails throughout the course to which Mr. Aboud replied that part of the design will be in a future phase.

VI.B. Urban Forest Task Force Report

Dianne Plunkett Latham, Energy and Environment Commission member, gave a presentation regarding tree policies and GreenStep City recommendations. Tom Horwath, City Forester, was also at the meeting and was the advisor to the Urban Forest Task Force.

Ms. Latham first talked about the Emerald Ash Borer proposal and indicated they recommend that the Park Board adopt this proposal.

Chair Gieseke noted he thinks the Park Board needs to discuss this as part of their work plan and discuss how they want to approach the information being presented tonight because this is the first chance they've had to look at it as a Park Board. Member Steel stated that she thinks it would be great to discuss this as part of their strategic plan because she knows they are looking at a lot of environmental issues and therefore would like to talk about this information then.

Ms. Latham pointed out that right now they are just looking at the Emerald Ash Borer part and added that it has been vetted out by the Urban Forest Task Force as well as the EEC has also endorsed it. In her opinion this is not a controversial issue.

Member Segreto stated that to rephrase it they are basically asking that private individuals will not be required to cut their diseased trees down to which Ms. Latham replied that is the first component. Ms. Latham noted the second component is to increase the Parks & Recreation tree replacement budget from \$11,000 to \$21,000 to prepare for the Emerald Ash Borer loss. She added this is the forester's recommendation and has been endorsed by the task force. Ms. Latham stated the third component is they don't recommend chemical treatment of the trees as a general solution; however, an occasional tree could be treated that way. The fourth component is to have a boulevard and parkland border tree survey. She added the forester has already done this for the parks but has found there really is an issue bordering the parks and on the boulevards and therefore would like to do a survey of these as well. Member Segreto commented that seems like a big job.

Member Steel indicated she is interested in discussing the policy further with regards to the strategic plan and making sure that all stakeholders are in the room when they have that discussion. However, when it comes to the budget item it seems to her like it's a staff issue. Chair Gieseke noted that he concurs.

Member Greene made a motion, seconded by Member Segreto to approve the City Forester's recommendation as is.

Member Steel indicated that she is a little confused what the recommendation is. Ms. Latham replied on the table right now is the Emerald Ash Borer and the four points it contains: include EAB on shade tree disease ordinance; increase forestry line items; expand inventory sites and chemical protections of any significant Emerald Ash Borer trees. Member Steel replied it's not in the form of a proposal or recommendation; it's more of what staff does on an everyday basis and therefore she doesn't understand why they would get involved. She stated she is happy to look at the recommendations brought forward by staff, but it's kind of confusing where this is coming from and what it is they are voting on. Chair Gieseke stated he doesn't think it's the right time to move forward until they have full accounting for what they are trying to do. He noted the Park Board is struggling because there is no unified recommendation in paperwork.

After discussion, **Member Greene made a motion to amend his recommendation, seconded by Member Segreto, to recommend Item A (approve the EBA policy) and Item C (update existing city ordinances with respect to trees).**

Member Steel stated that they do not have the minutes of the EEC meeting so she does not feel comfortable voting on this without their minutes. Secondly, they don't have jurisdiction over part of Item C and therefore doesn't feel comfortable approving that item. She stated they don't have the information they need to approve this tonight. Ms. Latham replied she still has not presented the other part of the tree ordinance.

Member Cella asked where the EAB policy to which Member Greene stated it's dated Jan. 13, 2015 and is a two-page document under staff comments. It's a very detailed paragraph and they are agreeing with staff. Member Cella indicated she is okay with staff doing their job but is saying if they are approving a policy to her a paragraph that has staff comments is not a policy and that is her confusion.

Member Steel pointed out she would like to see what the EEC approved so that they are consistent.

Member Jones stated going back to her original comment there is a lot to go through and this was on their work plan to discuss. She noted Member Segreto and herself were on a committee to sort through the recommendations and for some reason this was put on the agenda before they even had a chance to work with that group. Therefore, she would like to sort through this and put it back on the agenda after they have had a chance to figure it out.

Member Greene retracted everything he said.

Member Jones made a motion, seconded by Member Steel to table this for another meeting.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick, Cella
Motion carried.

Ms. Latham went over Section 36 of the Tree Ordinance changes.

Ms. Latham went over the changes in Section 24-22.

Member Segreto made a motion, seconded by Member Jones to adopt the revisions of the City of Edina related to trees section 24-22 including adding Gingko to the prohibited list.

Ayes: Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick, Cella
Motion carried.

Ms. Latham went over the changes in Section 30-180. She noted that they added "chipping" because that is the typical way to dispose of the Emerald Ash Borer. She noted they took out "burning" because it is not listed in Section 30-199. She explained that by taking out "burning" that does not mean that you cannot burn trees as a solution to diseased nuisances; they just didn't want it in there to encourage burning because of people with breathing disorders. Therefore, they don't want to encourage it, but it is still allowed. She noted that in section 30-199 they adding "chipping" as a controlled mechanism. She noted these are just housekeeping sorts of things that the Urban Forest Task Force has recommended. Chair Gieseke asked if the EEC has approved this to which Ms. Latham replied yes.

Member Segreto made a motion, seconded by Member Jones to adopt the proposed revisions to the City Ordinance section 30-180 and section 30-199 as approved by the EEC and contained in their packet.

Chair Gieseke stated that he thinks taking “burning” out of there is misleading. Ms. Latham replied it’s not in section 30-199 so it makes it consistent with that so either put both of them in or take both of them out. She stated they can’t really prohibit it because it is a way of disposing of diseased trees but they don’t want to give the impression they are encouraging it. Chair Gieseke stated that he would like to see it in both because he thinks it’s a little bit of a miscommunication. Member Steel stated that it seems like it’s not a policy issue as much as an informational city communication type of issue such as here are the proper ways to dispose of your tree for the tree program for the city. She stated from a legal perspective she does get a little worried about why you need to have chipped in it but not burned.

Member Segreto pointed out Ms. Latham was successful in getting the fireplace shut down at Centennial Lakes under the thought that it’s not good for the environment and that’s why it wouldn’t be in this ordinance. They don’t want to suggest it by way of keeping it in the city ordinance.

Member Steel indicated that as their role of Park Board do they want to change this code and not totally understand the ramifications or do they want to approve something that says the forester will work with communications to encourage residents to use more healthy ways of disposing of trees. She noted that may be a much more effective approach to working with residents. Member Segreto responded in theory that sounds good but how much is the part-time forester going to get involved every time someone cuts a tree down.

Member Cella stated there is a difference as she understands it. It is legal in Edina to burn a tree and it is not against city ordinance; however, they are leaving it out as one of the methods that could be used to dispose of a tree. Therefore, she has a little trouble understanding that distinction without passing it on to legal counsel. Ms. Latham pointed out that any ordinance that Park Board approves before it goes to City Council it does go before legal. Member Steel added that unfortunately it makes the Park Board look like we have the intent of removing burning as an option if we do misinterpret it.

Ayes: Greene, Jones, Segreto, McCormick

Nays: Steel, Jacobson, Gieseke, Cella

Motion failed.

Ms. Latham asked Ms. Kattreh whether Park Board has any jurisdiction over the “Living Streets” portion to which Ms. Kattreh replied that is a transportation issue.

Ms. Latham went over the GreenSteps City Best Practices, Number 18, Action 5, regarding low maintenance native landscaping. She explained this action states that there are 50% native plantings for all new perennial plantings in city parks excluding Edinborough and Arneson Acres parks. Member Steel asked if the Edina Garden Council has weighed in on this to which Ms. Latham replied yes, they support this and added that the Edina Garden Council is proactively planting perennial gardens for pollinators and they do use 100% native plants. Ms. Latham pointed out this does not pertain to annual gardens such as those that are typically located at the entrance to many parks.

Member Jones made a motion, seconded by Member Steel, to recommend that they include this in the work group that is going to be presenting the other issue that was on the agenda.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick, Cella

Motion carried.

Ms. Latham went through the next action which states they implement a policy similar to the Minneapolis Park Department’s list of plants NOT recommended for planting in the city parks. These

plants are high maintenance because they are either invasive, have chronic pest problems, or are designated as noxious weeds by the State of Minnesota.

Member Jones made a motion, seconded by Member Steel, to recommend that they include this in the work group that is going to be presenting the other issue that was on the agenda.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick, Cella

Motion carried.

Ms. Latham went over the GreenSteps City Best Practices, Number 18, Action 6, which recommends certifying selected city parks as Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries similar to what Braemar Golf Course has done.

Member Segreto stated this item seems like it should be in the strategic plan so they find out what the benefits are and which parks would be ideal.

Member Segreto made a motion, seconded by Member Jones, recommending this item be in the strategic plan.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick, Cella

Motion carried.

Ms. Latham went over the GreenSteps City Best Practices, Number 18, Action 8, which recommends use of volunteers for noxious weed abatement by establishing an annual institutionalized program which provides maintenance via professionally spraying buckthorn and other noxious weeds, which generally fill in the void where buckthorn was removed. They would begin with allocating \$15,000/year for select woodlands, which have both high priority and/or high usage such as Lake Cornelia and/or Bredesen Park.

Member Segreto commented that it seems to her like that is also a strategic planning issue that we have a buckthorn removal goal and figure out how much resources we are going to put forth towards it. Member Steel replied that they already have a program in place so they need to make sure they see what potential they have with the existing one. Member Segreto responded that it doesn't look like what they have in place is doing any good at all. Ms. Latham added that if you are not doing maintenance you are not doing any good at all and you are opening up a canopy where secondary noxious weeds come in, for example garlic mustard, etc. Member Segreto indicated that it seems to her that you have to fight your battles where you can win them and be focused. She stated they are not going to be able to eradicate buckthorn out of the parks and so they need to figure out if there is a park or place where we need to try to maintain a buckthorn removal policy that has stewardship to it.

Ms. Latham indicated that the Garden Council would like to explore with the Park Board the possibility of doing restoration at Bredesen Park because right now it is pretty much a noxious weed preserve. She indicated they are exploring the possibility with the City Forester and if the Park Board and Edina Garden Council are amenable that they could start at the entrance and do restoration along the paths and the residents could then appreciate the wild flowers that would be planted. In addition, there would be less maintenance because they would no longer have to cut back the buckthorn from the bike paths and walking paths every year. She stated that with Park Board's permission she would like to recommend that the City Forester be allowed to talk further with the Edina Garden Council about the possibility of a restoration project at Bredesen Park.

Member Jones moved to make a motion, seconded by Member Segreto, to begin the discussion and come back with a proposal.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick, Cella

Motion carried.

Member Steel stated that she doesn't think they need to vote on all of these, they can give staff direction. Chair Gieseke commented that they are voting on a lot of issues that probably could be dealt with without a formal vote.

Ms. Latham pointed out to the Park Board that to have a successful restoration maintenance program the part-time City Forester must be converted into a full-time natural resource manager with an ecology background so that their 600 acres of natural area can have a more effective restoration and maintenance plan. She explained the problem with that is it collides with something else that is going on simultaneously with the Planning Commission. They are looking at a tree ordinance where the City Forester has to look at all of these building plans; however, the problem with that is it's too easy to get around this ordinance. She explained what a builder would do is take down the trees more than a year in advance or wait until after the construction is approved and take them down. She explained that would eat up a lot of staff time and you really aren't getting anything done. Ms. Latham pointed out that the Urban Forest Task Force felt more productive use of forester's time would be to work with items dealing with our forests. She noted that they stand to lose many more trees due to buckthorn and noxious weeds than through redevelopment. Therefore, the Urban Forest Task Force and the EEC feel better use of the forester's time is to work on the forestry issues rather than looking at landscape plans for people's backyards.

Chair Gieseke commented that he doesn't think that is the Park Board's jurisdiction because they have never recommended staffing levels.

VI.C. Water Quality, Wetland and Natural Resources Plan – Braemar Golf Course

Ross Bintner, Environmental Engineer, gave a presentation to the Park Board on this plan.

Member McCormick asked if they have storm water issues on other parts of the course or is it mainly limited to the par three and driving range areas. Mr. Bintner indicated regarding the storm water issues there is an old aerial photo from the thirties that showed where the ditches were located and as the areas developed around Braemar access water ran onto the course from the developments and now the situation they see is seasonal and frequent flooding. He thought the flood concerns were the most important thing.

Member Segreto asked what initiated this plan to be developed. Mr. Bintner stated in 2012, during the last CIP cycle, they started to plan better between departments and at that time the Engineering Department made the recommendation to include those CIP projects as an add-on to the golf course project. Member Segreto stated with the scope of the golf course project they would have to include them, otherwise they would subject themselves to a lot of criticism if they did not and felt better about the wetlands and environment issues that will be triggered by the golf course project. She noted she was really concerned about the oak savanna because they are confined to the delineation lines of the watershed area and she did not want that to get lost in the public process that people are not cognizant that they will be cutting down 15 acres or so of oak savanna if they opt for the first two plan options.

Mr. Bintner stated the project boundaries needed to be defined and reviewed those boundaries with the Park Board.

Member Segreto stated they are getting some prairie but they are losing two to three hundred year-old trees.

VI.D. Centennial Lakes Promenade Phase Four Update

Ross Bintner, Environmental Engineer, gave a presentation to the Park Board on this plan.

VI.E. 2015 Park Board Work Plan

Ms. Kattreh gave a quick update on the Work Plan.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

VII.A. Council Updates

No discussion

VIII. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No discussion

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Kattreh gave staff updates.

A member asked if they will have the opportunity to see what is planned for the Braemar Clubhouse.

Ms. Kattreh stated she will bring a presentation to the Park Board at the February meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Member Gieseke made a motion, seconded by Member Segreto, to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m.

Ayes: Members Steel, Jacobson, Cella, Greene, Gieseke, Jones, Segreto, McCormick.

Motion carried.